Reservoir Operations *Study*

TVA

Watts Bar Reservoir Operations Under the ROS Preferred Alternative

Background

The final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for TVA's Reservoir Operations Study recommends changes in the policies that guide TVA's operation of the Tennessee River and reservoir system. These changes would better align TVA's operating policies with the values expressed by the public during the comprehensive study of how TVA operates the reservoir system.

The FEIS includes the Preferred Alternative developed by TVA staff based on extensive public and agency input and detailed technical analysis. The Preferred Alternative combines elements of the alternatives outlined last summer in the draft Environmental Impact Statement, including elements designed to enhance navigation, reservoir recreation, tailwater recreation, and scenic beauty. Adjustments also were made to avoid or reduce unacceptable impacts to other objectives, including flood risk, water quality, power supply, aquatic species, wetlands, and shoreline erosion.

Under the Preferred Alternative, TVA would no longer target specific summer pool elevations. Instead reservoir operations would be aimed at managing the flow of water through the system to meet the objectives identified by the public and others who participated in the scoping process conducted at the beginning of the study.

This approach would increase recreation opportunities on tributary storage reservoirs by limiting the drawdown of those reservoirs from June 1 through Labor Day, as long as rainfall and runoff are sufficient to meet project-specific and system-wide flow requirements. Flow requirements also would be used to protect water quality and aquatic resources, ensure year-round commercial navigation, and provide an adequate supply of cooling water for TVA's coal-fired and nuclear power plants. Additional water—beyond that required to meet flow requirements—would be released from tributary storage reservoirs only when necessary to preserve the reliability of the TVA power system.

Additional information on the ROS and TVA's Preferred Alternative is available online at www.tva.com/ros or by calling TVA toll-free at 888-882-7675. A printed copy of the FEIS also may be available at your local public library.

Next steps

The public is invited to review and comment on the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for TVA's Reservoir Operations Study during a 45-day period continuing through April 12, 2004.

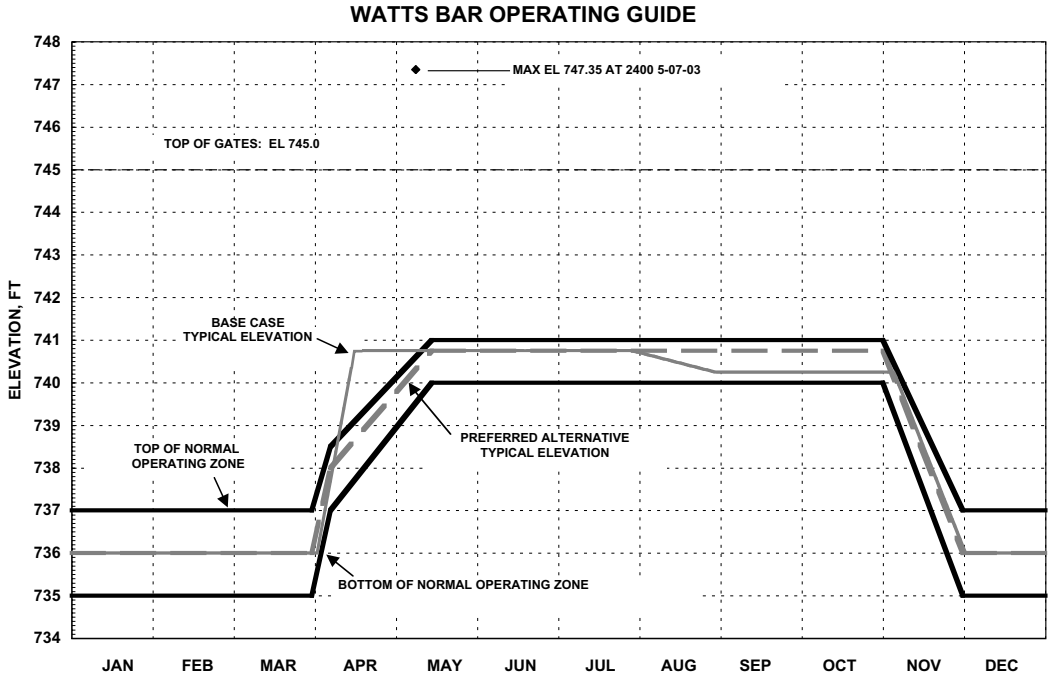
Comments may be submitted by accessing the ROS web site at www.tva.com/ros; by mail to TVA Reservoir Operations Study, WT 11A, 400 West Summit Hill Dr., Knoxville, TN 37902; or by fax to 865-632-3146. If you would like more information, please call TVA toll-free at 888-882-7675.

The TVA Board of Directors is expected to make a decision in late spring 2004 about whether to change TVA's reservoir operating policies.

How Watts Bar will be affected

Under the Preferred Alternative, the seasonal drawdown of Watts Bar Reservoir would be delayed from August 1 until November 1.

In addition, the completion of the spring fill would be delayed on Watts Bar and on the other two upper Tennessee River reservoirs—Fort Loudoun/Tellico and Chickamauga—to provide additional flood damage reduction at Chattanooga. Under current operations, weather permitting, TVA fills these reservoirs to summer levels during the first two weeks of April. Under the Preferred Alternative, about half of the normal fill would occur during the first week of April to ensure that fish spawning areas are covered with water. The remainder of the fill would gradually occur over the next five weeks, with fill being completed by mid-May.



Top of Gates represents the maximum controlled elevation at a project, typically the top of a spillway gate in a closed position or crest elevation of an uncontrolled outlet structure.

Top and Bottom of Normal Operating Zone depicts a zone of normal operation for power production and mosquito control operations (in the summer). During high flow periods, the top of the normal operating zone may be exceeded for the regulation of flood flows.

Preferred Alternative Typical Elevation is the reservoir elevation that represents the typical headwater elevation (at the dam) for a project. During high flows, upstream elevations on the reservoir will be higher due to the buildup of head required to pass water through the reservoir.